

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A culture comprising a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture such that the bacterium reproducibly multiplies over time, wherein the bacterium is of the same species as the *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium strain deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said bacterium is deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under Deposit No. I-2202.

4-9. (Canceled)

5 ~~10.~~ (Currently Amended) An antigen ~~according to claim 5~~ isolated from a *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium, wherein said antigen is a protein of 200 kD determined by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis using the Western blotting technique, which ~~reacts with a~~ ^{binds to} specific monoclonal antibody directed against the bacterium *Tropheryma whippelii* responsible for Whipple's disease or an antigen of said bacterium, said antibody being produced by a hybridoma deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under the Deposit No. I-2411.

6 ~~11.~~ (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of diseases associated with infections caused by *Tropheryma whippelii*, comprising contacting serum or any other biological fluid of a patient with a culture according to claim 1 or a *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium obtained from said culture, and detecting an immunological reaction.

12-14. (Canceled)

7
15. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* serological diagnosis
according to claim ~~11~~⁶, comprising:

- depositing a solution containing said *Tropheryma whippelii* bacterium in or on a solid support;
- introducing serum or any other biological fluid into or onto said support;
- introducing a solution of a labeled antibody specific for a human immunoglobulin, which recognizes said bacterium, into or onto the support;
- observing an incubation period;
- rinsing the solid support; and
- detecting an immunological reaction.

8
16-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method for the *in vitro* diagnosis of diseases associated with infections caused by *Tropheryma whippelii*, comprising contacting serum or any other biological fluid of a patient with the antigen of ~~claim 4~~⁵, ~~claim 10~~⁵, and detecting an immunological reaction.

26-28. (Canceled)

9
29. (Previously Presented) A method for the *in vitro* serological diagnosis according to claim ~~25~~⁸, comprising:

- depositing a solution containing said antigen in or on a solid support;
- introducing serum or any other biological fluid into or onto said support;
- introducing a solution of a labeled antibody specific for a human immunoglobulin, which recognizes said antigen, into or onto the support;
- observing an incubation period;
- rinsing the solid support; and
- detecting an immunological reaction.

2
~~30.~~ (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said culture is not a cell culture in monocyte cells.

3 ~~31.~~ (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim 1, wherein said culture is a cell culture in immortalized cells.

4 ~~32.~~ (Previously Presented) A culture according to claim ~~31~~³, wherein the immortalized cells are fibroblast cells.

33. (Canceled)

34. (New) A culture comprising a bacterium responsible for Whipple's disease, said bacterium being isolated and established in culture such that the bacterium reproducibly multiplies over time, wherein the bacterium reacts with an antibody produced by a hybridoma deposited in the CNCM of the Institut Pasteur under the Deposit No. I-2411.